

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1884

A TEACHING UNIVERSITY FOR LONDON

A MOVEMENT, which first began to shape itself into form at the Educational Conference at the Health Exhibition, made its first formal public appearance at the house of the Society of Arts on Monday afternoon. The crowd of well-known and much-occupied men with which the room was filled was at least an earnest of something more than a discussion of a mere speculative project; and the speeches made, though revealing, as might be expected, a considerable diversity in point of view, were listened to with a closeness of attention which indicated a pretty confident belief that the movement was not likely to evaporate in mere debate.

Lord Reay opened the proceedings with an address, which was admirably conceived both in tone and matter. If subsequent speakers scarcely can have been said to have carried on the discussion on the same level, this may be attributed to the fact that the report submitted to the meeting for adoption by Lord Justice Fry embodied an amount of detailed suggestion which the meeting was naturally not in any way prepared to assimilate without a good deal of consideration.

Every one knows that we have in London a body bearing the title of a University. Every one, at least who has looked into the matter, knows equally the immense services which this institution has rendered in raising the standard of middle class education. But a University all the same, in any intelligible sense, it is not. It is essentially nothing more than a Government Department for giving, after examination, academic certificates. Nor, as Professor Lankester very properly pointed out, is it, any more than the Home Office for example, an institution which, because its head-quarters happen to be in London, is locally identified with the metropolis in the same sense in which the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are identified with the places in which their work is carried on. The operations of the University of London are, in point of fact, more wide-reaching than those of any other Government office, and are, indeed, co-extensive with the Empire itself.

In one aspect the whole movement may be regarded as an outcome of the nascent municipal feeling in the life of the metropolis. The Examining University, for reasons stated above, does not, and in its present form never can, satisfy the reasonable desire that the metropolis should possess that academic crown which is worn by every other great capital in the world. The disembodied spirit of what might be brooding over gloomy examination halls may strike a wholesome terror into the hearts of candidates, and sustain a certain feeling of emancipation in the hearts of candidates; but it cannot, and does not, excite any enthusiasm in either. Nor has the cold officialism of Burlington Gardens ever treated with more than a lofty disdain the more humanly organised institutions which furnish the victims who pour into its portals.

The movement to constitute a Teaching University is undoubtedly in some degree due to a reaction against this state of things. Those whose business "is to teach, know

now-a-days that a great deal depends on the way teaching is done. It is here that the educational bodies of the metropolis feel their isolation. There is no central authority to gather their representatives into its fold and smooth away the individual difficulties in the way of common action and" bringing into harmonious cooperation the dual business of examination and teaching. Life is getting appreciably shorter now; the thread of existence has more knots though its length remains the same. The time that can be given to education out of an ordinary existence cannot be indefinitely expanded. Method must be brought in to economise labour in instruction. This is a very different thing to cramming; it is on the contrary a scientific mode of directing the educational attack in the most effective way. Here the rulers of the University have shown themselves most deficient in sympathy; they have turned an obdurately deaf ear to the entreaties which have been repeatedly addressed to them by the Convocation of the University to get "touch" with the teaching bodies. And, what is perhaps even still more irritating, though, as remarked at the meeting, for the most part, laymen in education, they still issue in a purely *doctrinaire* spirit directions which of course from the nature of the case have the binding force of edicts at the actual seats of education. Dr. Carpenter, with an official optimism excusable enough in one who has devoted a lifetime to loyal and honest work, contended, it is true, that the university was blameless in this respect. But those who are familiar with the other side of the shield know how far this is from being the feeling in teaching institutions. Manchester has already broken away from the rule of Burlington Gardens, and it can scarcely be doubted that had the University of London shown a more conciliatory attitude with regard to the formation of Boards of Studies, the present movement would in all probability have taken a very different shape.

It is proposed, then, alongside of the existing examinations to have a Teaching University. This it is also intended should examine and grant degrees. It may be thought that this is going too far, and that it is not desirable that the one thing should become a mere mechanical reflection of the other. But the risk is small; the principle is now-a-days accepted by all who have really studied the matter, that teachings and examinings must be in the hands of the same persons; but this does not imply that the same individuals should control both. Nor, it must be admitted, is this merely a matter of interest to the teaching bodies. The imperfect educational discipline to which a large proportion of the candidates who frequent the examination rooms of the university have been subjected, leads to an inordinate amount of rejections. This creates the misconception in the public mind, that the examinations are unreasonably severe. The real fact is that the candidates are badly prepared. In this way the want of cooperation between teachers and examiners becomes indirectly a real obstacle to educational progress.

So far we have endeavoured to give our readers an account as distinct as we have been able to gather of the forces which have initiated this movement, and the aims which are desired by it. We cordially sympathize with both, and it is because we do so that we must now indulge in a little criticism on the scheme as put forward by Lord Reay's committee. In the first place, we found it difficult

to believe that the creation of a new university with full powers in the metropolis is ever likely to come within the bounds of political possibility. It is not that the Government will be inaccessible, but that it will be difficult to persuade general public opinion of the necessity of such a course. We believe that it will in the end be necessary eventually to come to terms with the existing university. The fact that eleven members of its Senate have joined the movement, shows that that body at any rate contains a powerful element discontented with its present asphyxiation by red tape. What, however, we do hope to see is the federation of our scattered educational bodies in London into Faculties, which would be practically universities in all but the name, and the representatives of which should have a leading voice in the management of the Central University. The only speakers who really evinced at the meeting a clear idea of their own policy, were the representatives of the Medical profession. Prof. Marshall showed with singular lucidity that the altered character of medical education has made the continued isolation of the smaller medical schools a practical impossibility. Not merely has technical instruction gone beyond the capacity of the junior members of the medical staff who are usually told off for it, but the appliances required are too costly for all but the wealthier schools to provide efficiently, and the teachers are themselves wanted for the more minute and careful clinical instruction which is now everywhere demanded.

The Medical Schools will therefore combine, perhaps, into some four great groups, for purposes of education and the organisation of laboratories, just as the small colleges at Oxford and Cambridge have combined for purposes of intra-collegiate lecturing. Once federation has begun, the foundation of a medical faculty for London is only a question of time. This will come about, probably, whatever the fate of the more general movement. But such a faculty would undoubtedly be found to be politically a body to whose just claims in direct medical education the University of London would find it impossible to lend a deaf ear.

The faculty of law may also shape itself into existence, though, it must be admitted, the elements of its form are, at present, very dim and shadowy.

To balance these we want a faculty of literature and science, and the materials for these are to be found in a federation of University and King's Colleges, as suggested by Prof. Lankester. If the representatives of such a faculty were allowed a proper share in the councils of the existing University, it is not obvious why such a federation should be intrusted with a separate degre-giving power.

We now come to what appears to us the weak point in the scheme. A university may impart knowledge; it may test its quality when imparted; but that which has ever been the peculiar glory of university life, is to enlarge its bounds. But except a few well-expressed sentences which fell from Lord Reay, and a sentence put into the conclusion of the report very much with the air of an after-thought, this very important matter does not seem to have received very much attention. Now the most melancholy feature about such elements of university organisation as already exist in London, is its displayed incapacity to retain its best men. There is an obvious dearth of such

posts as would satisfy their legitimate ambition. No sooner amongst us does a man rise to the first rank at any seat of education, than sooner or later he is drafted off to one of the universities in the provinces. To take the first instances that come to hand: Cambridge has robbed us of Michael Foster, and Oxford of Burdon Sanderson, while the greatest biological teacher of the day is driven from England by ill-health after a life toilsomely spent in the lowest order of teaching—drudgery. What is absolutely essential to add lustre and distinction to the work of a Metropolitan University is a body of University Professors who would take charge of the higher studies, which never can be properly cared for by bodies sedulously occupied with the very serious business of the higher education. What we hope then some day to see is the University of London equipped with a proper staff of Regius Professors, who themselves would be at the least an invaluable bond of union between its own too abstract isolation and the living reality of the actual teaching bodies.

Although we could have wished for greater insistence on this—as it seems to us—most vital point, we cannot but entertain the highest hopes of the usefulness of the present movement. It has some of the notes of healthy organic development; it has at least spontaneity and individual activity, which have always been the foundations of political achievement amongst us. At the worst, mere effervescence is better than stagnation, and we think there is more in this movement than effervescence. In any case we cannot too warmly tender our expression of acknowledgment to public men like Lord Reay and Sir George Young, who have spared neither pains nor labour in the purely patriotic labour of giving our own too inarticulate murmurings definite form and expression.

THE POLYZOA OF THE "CHALLENGER" EXPEDITION

The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. "Challenger." Part XXX. "Report on the Polyzoa—the Cheilostomata." By George Busk, F.R.S., V.P.L.S., &c. (Published by Order of Her Majesty's Government, 1884.)

THE description of the Polyzoa collected during the expedition of the *Challenger* was undertaken by Mr. Busk, and the first part of his Report, comprising the Cheilostomatous forms, or those in which the mouth of the zoecium or cell is provided with a movable lid which shuts down over the polypide when retracted, has just been published.

The investigation of this important part of the *Challenger* collections could not have been placed in better hands. As an authority on the zoology of the Polyzoa, Mr. Busk stands pre-eminent; and the present admirable Report of 216 pages and 36 plates bears testimony to a laborious and conscientious investigation, the value of which as a contribution to our knowledge of the multitude of forms associated under the name of Polyzoa cannot be over-estimated.

The number of species of Cheilostomatous Polyzoa in the *Challenger* collection is 286, and when these came into Mr. Busk's hands he found no less than 180 of them